

# Arabic Language Production: Challenges for Indonesian Adult and Children Learners

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**Keywords:** *Arabic learners; language production; learning difficulties*

**Abstract:** Many learners of foreign language face difficulties in the process of language acquisition. They are required to study his second language seriously and passionately, but in practice there are many obstacles or difficulties encountered during the process of language production. They may encounter some difficulty in writing/speaking or reading/listening. The purpose of this study is to identify and explore the difficulties in the production process of Arabic. The study uses descriptive methods and collects data through direct techniques, namely: observing and interviewing the learners in the learning process. It identifies stages in which learners find learning difficulties in both composing perfect sentences and understanding Arabic speech. These difficulties occur when learners are at the beginning of learning Arabic as a foreign language. Children beginner learner face difficulty in the message stage, while adult beginner learners think that the difficulty occurs in the functional stage.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by human utensils. Language itself is often likened to as a means of formulating intentions and expressing individual feelings to regulate various group activities (Subini, 2012). Most people learn more than one language to meet various communication needs.

Language is the process of communicating the language. The language process itself requires thoughts and feelings that are carried out by the human brain to produce words or sentences. Theoretically the language process begins with semantic encoding, grammatical encoding and phonological encoding. "Semantic encoding and grammatical encoding" takes place in the brain, while "phonological encoding" starts from the brain and then continues its implementation by means of speech that involves the brain's talking nervous system (Rusmaji, 1995). The three codes are related to one's language production activities which are also closely related to the relationship between the brain and the speech organs of a person.

According to Clement (in Weiner, 2003) learning difficulties can result in incompetence or obstacles in the process of perception, conceptualization, language, memory, and concentration of attention, and others. If at an early stage learning difficulty can be overcome, a number of other consequences can be prevented. Including in learning the language, there are times when students encounter difficulties that interfere with the process of acquiring the language. If it is not resolved early, it is possible to inhibit the process of language acquisition and the maturation of target language acquisition (Harwell, 2001). Even this will result in a decrease in motivation to obtain the targeted language.

When learning takes place sometimes a second language student will find language difficulties unconsciously, because in learning they are required to understand the language and recite the language with sound. In this case the language or speech production expressed requires the right set of words in its delivery (Wardani, 1995). Language difficulties have some scope such as recognizing the characteristics of language construction, recognizing functions in the community framework, and language skills.

Learning a second language, especially Arabic often results in good language difficulties in reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. These four aspects are closely related and cannot be separated from each other. In the beginning of learning a student still mixes his mother tongue with his second language, whether in the composition of the sentence or using the original intonation, clearly or vaguely.

Language and stage difficulties are a phenomenon of difficulty in language or speech production often occurred. Therefore, language difficulties need to be studied in depth. Because every human being has difficulty in producing his language, the two are different, some can express language from the beginning and some can not express language from the beginning, he begins to express it after a few months or years of learning.

Studies on the difficulties in learning Arabic by Indonesian students have been done (Nawir, 2014), but in the context of learning Arabic in general in Indonesia there has not been much research on the difficulties of the production process of Arabic. Arabic learners find difficulties in the production of language. Furthermore, this study will examine what difficulties children and adult learners face in learning Arabic as a foreign language in Indonesia.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Language Production

Production is the process of issuing results or making outputs, while utterance is a sentence that is spoken. So, speech production is a process that produces spoken sentences as expressions of the mind and feeling of the speaker. There are four steps in speech production:

First: the level of the message, i.e. the message delivered will be processed, for example: Muhammad is teaching Ahmad, from the sentence a message can be taken. First: Muhammad was a teacher, both Muhammad was teaching his students, third Ahmad was a student taught by Muhammad.

Second: the functional level, that is, the lexical form is chosen and then becomes a role and given a syntactic function, as in the example: Muhammad is teaching Ahmad, then Muhammad is as a subject and Ahmad as an object.

Third: the positional level, which is the stage of forming constituents and affixation, this is a process of sorting lexical forms that aim to give

hierarchical meaning. For example in the sentence Muhammad was teaching Ahmad. In the utterance words are formed to be meaningful, while affixation is done to distinguish meaning between active or passive.

Fourth: the level of philology, which is to form the phonological structure of speech, the sounds of the sentence are sounded correctly not back and forth (Dardjowidjojo, 2008). Suppose the word Muhammad in the sentence Muhammad is teaching ahmad not to be reversed which will result in incomprehension.

The details of speech or language production are as follows:

The first type is discourse production planning, In this stage of the discourse is divided into two, namely a dialogue and monologue, the fundamental difference in the two discourses lies in the process of intrusion between the speaker and listener. In the dialogue discourse there are two actors, namely the speaker and the one who is invited to speak, while in the monologue discourse there is only one actor. If the discourse is an oral discourse, then there is one speaker, if the writing is one writer.

The second type is sentence production, at this stage there are some processes, namely:

- Propositional content. In this stage the speaker determines what proposition he wants to state.
- Illocutionary charge. Here, the speaker determines the meaning and form to be conveyed and the method chosen. In this charge there are several factors, namely: social position, differences in age, kinship, and degree of familiarity between the speaker and the person invited to speak.
- Thematic structure. It is related to the grammatical or semantic function in the sentence.

After completing the sentence production planning process, it is continued at the third level namely constituent production planning (Dardjowidjojo, 2008). At this stage the right word is chosen according to the will. Maybe if the referent is a woman he likes then choose the word sweet, but if he is a person who is hated then the word cheap is chosen.

Fourth type: articulation program. After the word is chosen, an articulatory program is formed which is summarized into one planned constituency at once.

Fifth type: articulation. The final step is to convey or execute the contents of the articulatory program, in accordance with the desired

conversation. Noteworthy is the misunderstanding that speaking is the opposite of hearing. This does not mean that the listener always blurts out what he hears. Listeners process messages to then take on the role of speakers that produce sounds that turn into meaning. This is in accordance with the intonation and how to convey the contents of the conversation.

## 2.2 Stages of Language Difficulties

Difficulties are things that can cause problems or disturbances in producing language, or something that the problem cannot be solved (KBBI, 1990). A difficulty is also a condition that shows the characteristics of obstacles in activities to achieve goals so that a better effort is needed to overcome and resolve the disorder. Interference or difficulty in language is closely related to disorders or diseases that cause communication disorders (Indah, 2017). Therefore, if the language user experiences interference, the communication is interrupted.

Every child has a difference in thinking maturity, intelligence and language skills. Therefore, children in speaking, listening, reading or writing are not the same or different. It may be that he is smart in speaking but he is weak in pouring his thoughts into writing. Or he is good at pouring his ideas in written form, but he is weak in pouring them in the form of utterances (Djamarah, 2008).

Although each child has the ability to learn Arabic, their ability to capture learning varies. There are stages of difficulty experienced by each child in learning Arabic, because they learn a second language from the mother tongue.

At the beginner stage, a child who is just learning Arabic will have difficulty speaking words in Arabic, this is because he finds a new language in his life that is very different from the original language. As time goes by he will begin to memorize and understand how to pronounce words in Arabic. For example, say the letter *j* in Indonesian and the letter *ج* in Arabic, and so on.

On the intermediate stage, the difficulty of the children again leveled in terms of forming and arranging words into sentences, because of the differences that occur in how to compose sentences in Indonesian into Arabic. For example, in the example: I go to school every day, so in the production of language can be reversed in its preparation.

In the adult stage, a student already knows both words and sentences in Arabic but he is still not fluent in discussing due to lack of speaking habits in speaking in Indonesian, so he still often exchanges

with each other (Arsyad, 2003). There are two factors that cause children's difficulties in learning Arabic, namely: internal factors and external factors of children.

Internal factors are factors of age, health and intelligence of children. The age of the child will affect the level of difficulty, because then he has increased experience and level of need. Child's health is also one of the factors of children's difficulties in learning Arabic. Healthy children and good nutrition are faster in language development than children who experience health problems. Every child will definitely have different levels of intelligence, those who have normal intelligence tend to quickly develop their language. (Chaer, 2003).

The external factors are family relationships, community environment and first language. The process of interaction relations in a family environment that is not used to speaking in Arabic. The community environment is also a factor in the development of a language for children (Faldy, 2018), because their hearing and vision are different between Arabic and the everyday language they learn. In addition, linguists generally agree that the first language has a major influence on the mastery of the second language (Chaer, 2003). Therefore every child allows different abilities in language, especially learning Arabic which is influenced by mother tongue.

## 3 METHOD

In this study a qualitative descriptive approach was used because researchers tried to describe the difficulty of producing a second language for beginner learners, so that the data to be collected in the study was descriptive in that it was about difficulties in the production of language for second language learners.

While this type of research uses naturalistic methods, naturalistic methods are used in natural places, and researchers do not make treatment, because researchers in collecting data are emic, that is based on the views of data sources, not the views of researchers (Sugiyono, 2014). This type is used because the data collection is based on the views of data sources such as interviews with the intended students, both children and adults.

In qualitative research that is the instrument or research tool is the researcher itself. Furthermore, research instruments use observation and interviews. The steps used in this study are: first, analyzing

problems related to reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Second, discuss the results of the analysis. Third, conclude and describe the problem. Fourth: report the results of the study.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the division of the structure of children's language in terms of aspects phonological acquisition, the In this study, several different samples were taken, including: the ages of children and adults who all had different backgrounds. Each sample the author mentioned above is a beginner learner who does not yet have an Arabic base.

First, those representing the age of the children were observed in Arabic lessons in 7th grade junior high school in Bojonegoro, Indonesia and interviewed the students. The results of observations indicate that there are some difficulties in students in the production of the second language, namely Arabic. This is supported by many factors, including the lack of teacher competency in the easy way of learning Arabic. Teacher competencies include inadequacy to root Arabic at the basic level. The way the teacher teaches as well as teaching students who are already proficient in the production of Arabic.

Based on observations, it seems that the Arabic language acquisition is not optimal due to limited time to learn Arabic in class. Considering that the school chosen as the research sample is a public high school, the proportion of hours of Arabic language lessons is not as much as Indonesian. Lack of exposure in Arabic will make it difficult for students to have the opportunity to produce speech in Arabic. Moreover, the number of students in one class is also less proportional to basic level Arabic learning. This causes each student not to have sufficient opportunities to practice language production in the context of training in speaking or dialogue in Arabic.

During observation, there was a lack of motivation of children in learning Arabic. The classroom situation shows the teacher centric rather than the active participation of students. Moreover, this is supported by a lack of awareness in practicing Arabic in daily communication. Students' motivation in Arabic does not support active learning which is needed in prompting learners to produce utterances in Arabic independently during the learning process takes place in the classroom.

Not a few foreign language teachers, especially Arabic, still rely on traditional learning

models such as Grammar Translation Method. This is not only commonly found in Arabic classes in Indonesia but also in other countries such as Japan (Sumi, 2010). However, learning with this traditional model does not always match the needs of learners, let alone students in the beginner stage.

The interview results show that students are not interested in learning Arabic. One student explained: "In the beginning of learning Arabic, it was difficult, even to understand certain vocabulary, I needed a picture or a direct demonstration. For example, the teacher uses gestures to explain. And I also need an interpreter when the teacher is speaking in Arabic. I really want to express a desire or communication with others in Arabic conversation but very difficult.

It can be understood from the child's answer that when a person, especially a child who has just learned a foreign language, must find a very striking difference in terms of how to read it, speak, so that the process of understanding is also a bit late. The production process is supported by the language acquisition process maximally. This is because the awareness of the speech sound in the second language is influenced by a mother tongue (Chiang, 2003; Nasution, 2013).

Basically, children have maximized their efforts in understanding Arabic through non-verbal support such as the use of gestures and other media by relating it to their mother tongue. Even in mother tongue, young age child is still developing their phonological awareness (Maharany, 2016; Nurjamiaty, 2015; Yuliawan, 2016; Wulandari, 2018; Eviyanti, 2008). Therefore, when he will produce Arabic he also needs the same tools to facilitate his speech. But because of the difficulties that prevent students from maximizing their Arabic production efforts. They will develop more difficulties when he learns further phonological production of the target language until adulthood (Jabbour, 2014).

Teaching Arabic to foreign speakers as reported from another study, is also influenced by several factors such as teacher and student characteristics, learning models, and the use of learning media (Basma, 2014). From this it is clear that the ability of teachers to adapt learning models that are appropriate to the characteristics of children's learning and children's needs such as their interests and desire, has not supported the process of language acquisition. Of course, this will have an impact on production difficulties in the target language, namely Arabic.



Secondly, those who represent adulthood are sampled from IKIP Bojonegoro students. According to one student, it is said "Arabic language, especially studying *qowa'id nahwu shorof* is a problem for me. More specifically for beginners who want to learn Arabic speech writing or translating mother tongue into Arabic, they will find challenges in writing or translating them. This is because every sentence of the texts has a different place or position. But I did not find it difficult at the beginning of the study, because I had memorized some good vocabulary from nouns or verbs. I started having difficulties for about a month since I started learning Arabic."

From this statement, it is very clear that for adult learners the production of Arabic has a different level of complexity than other language difficulties because each language has its own articulation difficulties. The other students also expressed a different reason, "For me this certainly presents its own challenges, especially as I am a beginner who wants to learn to speak and write in Arabic. Arabic vocabulary such as nouns or verbs is easier to learn and practice by adults because all vocabulary words have nothing in common with other vocabulary words. However, the difficulty is caused by the absence of habituation to write in Arabic or accustomed to but never speaking Arabic"

From the results of interviews with adult learner respondents above, there is a complexity of Arabic language production difficulties that enter the semantic encoding and grammatical encoding stages. This is slightly different from the difficulty of language production in children who are more dominated by the difficulty of the perception process and language conceptualization stages. In other words, the difficulty of producing Arabic in the beginner learning of children is at the message stage. As for adult beginner learners, the difficulty occurs in the functional stage.

For adult learners, the difficulty of producing Arabic is not influenced by low motivation factors as found in children's learners. The same thing is found in students who study Arabic in other Asian countries such as Japan. The desire to communicate and improve Arabic production skills actively including high, only constrained due to difficulties in the production formulation (Sumi, 2010, 2012).

In adult learners, difficulties in the functional stage can be caused by an imbalance between the number of receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Similar to the results of research on learning Arabic in the UK, the number of vocabulary that must be mastered, including the pronunciation method, is one of the learning difficulties that

inhibits the fluency of Arabic production (Teaching Arabic, 2016).

## 5 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, there are several factors underlying difficulties in pronouncing the phoneme of hijaiyah letters both from the age of children, to adults. Among them is due to the differences between the mother tongue and the second language and the composition of Arabic is different from the arrangement of mother tongue. In addition, the culture of the native language or mother tongue is different from the second language to learn. It is also supported by the lack of learner competency towards understanding and habituating Arabic conversation. It is also reported that another factor is limited time availability in second language learning (Arabic) both in formal and non-formal environments and also lack of motivation of learners in learning this second language. Most of them assume that Arabic is not used too much among intellectuals or international conferences. Arabic is assumed to be enough to be used in religious elements such as prayer, reading al quran or prayer, so that they are not confident when learning and communicating in Arabic.

Apart from the factors described above, it turns out that the difficulty stage encountered by learners from children and adults has a difference. In children it turns out that the difficulty stage encountered in learning Arabic is on vocabulary, how to read it or the *shahof* because it is very different from the mother tongue. While adult learners did not encounter difficulties at the beginning in learning this second language, because he already had several vocabulary memorized and learned in the past. However, he began to encounter difficulties in his second language production process in the middle stage of learning, because at this stage he started practicing the language and constructing the composition of the sentences. The second language begins to appear different, as in Indonesian it is usually the subject first then predicate, but in Arabic the predicate comes first then the subject. At this stage he starts to understand the meaning and its translation because translating Arabic cannot be rigid, but must pay attention to conformity in his mother tongue, serta harus memperhatikan konteks kalimatnya.

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